Rondeau

Provincial Park

Management Plan

Ontario
Ministry of
Natural
Resources

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Ministry of Natural Resources
Ontario

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Dear Friend:

I am pleased to provide you with a copy of the Rondeau Provincial Park Management Plan. This plan is the culmination of an intensive planning process for Rondeau that most recently involved public review of the Preliminary Management Plan that was released in July, 1989. Almost 300 submissions were received as a result of this public review of the preliminary plan.

You may be interested in the type of comments that were made by the public and how the Ministry of Natural Resources has responded to them. Therefore, for your interest, I am also attaching a special information bulletin "Rondeau Provincial Park Management Plan: Response to Public Input."

This plan will guide the management and operation of Rondeau Provincial Park for the next 20 years. A mandatory review of the plan will be undertaken in 10 years, but if the need arises amendments may be made earlier.

As we move forward in the implementation of various aspects of this management plan, we welcome your continued interest in the park and its programs.

Your contribution to the planning process which led to the production of the Rondeau Provincial Park Management Plan was greatly appreciated.

Wendy McNab
District Manager
Ministry of Natural Resources
Chatham District

RONDEAU PROVINCIAL PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN
RESPONSE TO PUBLIC INPUT

The Ministry of Natural Resources released the Rondeau Provincial Park Preliminary Management Plan to the public on July 18, 1989. Public comment was invited and close to 300 submissions were subsequently received. Some individuals used the comment form that was distributed with all copies of the plan or wrote letters. Organizations representing a variety of interests also commented. In addition, others signed petitions or sent form letters.

These comments were then carefully analyzed and evaluated by Ministry of Natural Resources' staff. This resulted in a number of changes being made to the preliminary plan.

A discussion of major changes to the preliminary plan follows.

Deer Management

More public comments were received about deer management than about any other aspect of the plan. While there was broad agreement that the problem of deer overpopulation should be dealt with, opinion was divided as to how this should be done. The preliminary plan called for the deer herd to be reduced to 100 to 125 animals and for that level to be maintained through annual culling carried out by ministry employees. Some who responded favoured instead relocating deer or using birth control to control numbers. Others agreed with the plan's proposal that deer be culled, but argued that a public hunt in the park was the best way to accomplish this. Yet others agreed with the preliminary plan's solution.

Following this public input, ministry staff again reviewed the various options for deer control that were presented in the preliminary management plan. In particular, there has been extensive consultation with scientists who are currently conducting research in the field of wild animal birth control. These discussions indicated that white-tailed deer birth control technology is still in early experimental stages and is not yet ready for application to a situation such as exists at Rondeau. However, it is recognized that alternative control methods now being researched may hold promise for the future. A commitment to support and monitor such research, to use it in appropriate pilot situations at Rondeau and to put it to use when practical is included in the final plan. Indeed, support for this research is already being provided by the Ministry of Natural Resources.

Given the general public understanding that something must be done to reduce the number of deer in order to protect the Carolinian forest and its associated wildlife species, the final plan re-emphasizes the need for deer population control. It makes a commitment to the adoption of a non-lethal approach to deer population control once this becomes scientifically and operationally possible. In the event that methods such as this are indeed practical for use at Rondeau, the ministry's strong preference is to use birth inhibition rather than the cull option as the method for controlling deer population levels within the park. However, in the interim, in order to reduce the herd significantly and quickly, a cull must be carried out in 1991 and 1992. The plan indicates that this interim culling of deer will be carried out by ministry staff.

Camping Facilities

The preliminary plan called for the expansion of the Rondeau Bay Campground, development of a new Lake Erie Campground and Pointe aux Pins (walk-in) Campground, and relocation of group camping. Some individuals questioned the need for more campsites when existing campsites were not used to capacity and, more specifically, questioned the rationale for development of walk-in camping at the South Point.

As a result of these comments, it is now explicitly stated that additional campsites will be developed in Rondeau only in response to demand. Development of walk-in camping at the South Point has been deleted from the final plan. The associated development zone (D3) has also been deleted, and this area now becomes part of an expanded Nature Reserve Zone. Accordingly, the existing storage area (used for temporary storage of woody debris collected by park staff and cottagers) will be moved to a location at the maintenance area.

Cottages

As recommended by the Provincial Park Advisory Council, the preliminary plan documented that cottage leases in the park extend to the year 2017. Cottages available for sale would be purchased by the ministry on a priority basis, subject to availability of funds. Some comments received stated that leases should be extended indefinitely, while others suggested that cottages were a detriment to the park and should be eliminated as soon as possible.

No change has been made in the section dealing with cottages, although it has been edited to improve its clarity. Interests of the general public dictate that the limited extent of shorelands in public ownership should be available for the use and enjoyment of the widest possible spectrum of visitors, insofar as this is compatible with the protection of park resources.

Waterfowl Hunting

Public response was mixed to the preliminary plan statement that waterfowl hunting would continue in a strictly controlled manner within the Natural Environment Zone only. Some individuals were concerned that creation of a Nature Reserve Zone restricted the area available for hunting. Conversely, others wanted hunting eliminated or a ban on the use of lead shot.

The final plan allows traditional waterfowl hunting in the Natural Environment Zone of the marsh, balanced by Nature Reserve designation of a representative portion of the marsh where hunting is not permitted. Existing feeding sanctuaries will be eliminated.

In recognition of the possible harmful effects of lead shot on the marsh ecosystem, the impact of the use of lead shot will be studied. Should significant negative impacts be found, a ban on the use of lead shot will be recommended.

Hazardous Tree Removal

To ensure public safety, the preliminary plan designated 30-metre-wide zones on each side of the public roads as Access Zones, where hazardous trees could be cut and salvaged. Some responses questioned whether the Access Zones should be that wide, and opposed salvage of felled trees.

The Ministry of Natural Resources must take reasonable measures to protect park visitors from falling trees. However, policies about hazardous trees and Access Zones have been revised and clarified to satisfy expressed concerns. Salvage will be more restricted. Access Zones will be managed in the same manner as adjacent zones (with the exception of hazardous tree removal).

Roads

Closing of some roads, as proposed in the preliminary plan, was a concern to some who responded. It was felt that much of the park would become inaccessible to a growing segment of the population -- senior citizens -- and to those with impaired mobility. In response, the plan has been revised to retain the existing Lakeshore Road for public vehicle access from the Visitor Centre south to the present vehicular turnaround. This will allow visitors to view Lake Erie and the beach from their vehicles, even if the Lake Erie Campground is eventually constructed, and will provide the potential for making the South Point somewhat more accessible to those who cannot walk a long distance.

Commercial Services

The section of the plan dealing with commercial services was revised to clarify the ministry's intentions about development of services inside and outside the park. The Ministry of Natural Resources will not actively encourage development outside the park; local ratepayers and their elected representatives will decide such issues. However, within Rondeau Provincial Park, only appropriate services will be offered. Rondeau will never resemble an amusement park; its natural character will be carefully preserved, and outdoor recreation in a natural setting will be featured.

Utilities

The preliminary plan provided no direction about utilities such as water and sewage. A section was added to provide such direction, and make it clear that the ministry's intention is to provide services for park facilities only.

Visitor Centre

Several comments pointed out how important the Visitor Centre is to Rondeau's visitor services program. In order to emphasize the importance of the Visitor Centre and more clearly explain the ministry's intention to upgrade it, an additional section has been added to the final plan.

Volunteers

Volunteers play an invaluable role in the operation of the park, both as individuals and as members of organizations, particularly the Friends of Rondeau. In recognition of this contribution, a separate section about volunteers has been added. It expresses ministry support for volunteer programs.

Resource Management

Many specific comments were received about management of vegetation and wildlife. Minor changes were made to the plan as a result of input received. For instance, inventory of flora and fauna is now listed on the implementation schedule. More specific direction about vegetation management will be provided by the vegetation management strategy. This will be prepared by qualified staff and will be subject to review by independent specialists.

General

Numerous minor revisions and additions have been made. In some cases, comments pointed out omissions which have been remedied. In other cases, public input indicated that the intended message was not clear. Parts of the plan have been rewritten to clarify the ministry's positions. Some revisions and additions are:

- a cultural resources management strategy will be prepared;
- additional research priorities have been added;
- a trail management strategy will be prepared;
- park roads will be repaved;
- sections concerning the Bay Side Centre and the Rondeau Bay Campground were rewritten to emphasize the improvements that would be made.

Conclusion

Comments received from the public encouraged the Ministry of Natural Resources to make significant revisions to the preliminary management plan. Thanks to input from concerned citizens, the Rondeau Provincial Park Management Plan will now effectively guide the operation and development of the park for some time to come.

APPROVAL STATEMENT

Rondeau Provincial Park, established in 1894 as Ontario's second provincial park, contains a priceless remnant of our natural heritage. Its Carolinian forest, unique landforms and extensive marsh contribute significantly to the resource values contained in Ontario's provincial park system. At the same time, Rondeau serves the recreational needs of a wide variety of visitors including campers, cottagers and day-users. The need for balancing protection of the park's important natural resources with recreational use can only be achieved through careful planning and management.

We are pleased to approve the Rondeau Provincial Park Management Plan as official policy for the management and development of this park. The plan reflects the ministry's intention to protect the natural and cultural features of Rondeau Provincial Park while maintaining and developing high quality opportunities for outdoor recreation and heritage appreciation for both residents of Ontario and visitors to the province.

David Johnstone
Regional Director
Southwestern Region

Norm R. Richards
Director
Parks and Recreational Areas Branch

CONTENTS

	Page
APPROVAL STATEMENT	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ii
1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 PARK POLICIES	1
2.1 Classification	1
2.2 Goal	1
2.3 Objectives	1
2.3.1 Protection	1
2.3.2 Heritage Appreciation	3
2.3.3 Recreation	3
2.3.4 Tourism	4
2.4 Park Boundary	4
2.5 Park Zoning	4
2.5.1 Development Zones	4
2.5.2 Access Zones	4
2.5.3 Natural Environment Zone	7
2.5.4 Nature Reserve Zone	7
3.0 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	7
3.1 Water	8
3.1.1 Quality	8
3.1.2 Levels	8
3.1.3 Erosion	8
3.2 Vegetation	8
3.2.1 Vegetation Management Principles	8
3.2.2 Vegetation Management Issues	8
3.3 Fauna	10
3.3.1 Waterfowl	11
3.3.2 Trapping	11
3.3.3 Deer	11
3.3.4 Nuisance Animals	12
3.4 Fisheries	12
3.5 Cultural Resources	13
4.0 OPERATIONS POLICIES	13
4.1 Visitor Services	13
4.1.1 Information	13
4.1.2 Interpretation	13
4.1.3 Outdoor Recreation	14
4.2 Research	14
4.3 Recreation Management	14
4.3.1 Camping	14
4.3.2 Day-Use	15
4.3.3 Boating	15
4.3.4 Tennis Courts	15
4.3.5 Trails	16
4.3.6 Bay Side Centre	16
4.3.7 Roads and Parking Areas	16
4.3.8 Utilities	16
4.3.9 Visitor Centre	16
4.4 Marketing	17
4.5 Commercial Services	17
4.6 Leasehold Interests	17
4.7 Pointe aux Pins Light	19
4.8 Emergency Services	19
4.9 Law Enforcement	19
4.10 Volunteers	19
5.0 DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES	19
6.0 IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE	20
7.0 SUMMARY OF THE RONDEAU PROVINCIAL PARK PLANNING PROGRAM	22
8.0 SELECTED REFERENCES	24
FIGURES	
FIGURE 1: PARK SETTING	2
FIGURE 2: PARK FEATURES AND PRESENT DEVELOPMENT	5
FIGURE 3: PARK BOUNDARY AND ZONING	6
FIGURE 4: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	after page 16
FIGURE 5: PRIORITY AREAS FOR COTTAGE ACQUISITION	18

1.0 INTRODUCTION:

Rondeau Provincial Park is located in Kent County, Ontario on Highway 51, 20 kilometres southeast of Blenheim, 20 kilometres southwest of Ridgetown and 40 kilometres southeast of Chatham (see Figure 1). The foresight of local residents and government in the last century was responsible for the implementation of "An Act To Establish A Provincial Park At Rondeau" in 1894. Today, Rondeau Provincial Park comprises 3,254 hectares and is administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources under Ontario Regulation 187-84. It is recognized as a significant component of Ontario's provincial park system.

The natural heritage of Rondeau provides internationally recognized opportunities for nature appreciation, including photography and bird watching. The park's environment, which includes several kilometres of beach, provides a range of recreational opportunities such as camping, fishing, boating, picnicking and hiking. The Visitor Centre houses many displays and is a focal point of the visitor services program (see Figure 2). In addition, there is a cottage community of 299 private leaseholds as of 1990.

Rondeau is a popular location for area day-users as well as a vacation destination. The park provides a significant contribution to southwestern Ontario's recreational day-use and camping needs and also makes important contributions to the other objectives of Ontario's provincial park system.

2.0 PARK POLICIES:

2.1 Classification:

Within Ontario's provincial park system, Rondeau Provincial Park is classified as a Natural Environment park in recognition of its provincially significant landforms and associated flora and fauna, as well as its capability to provide a diversity of outdoor recreational activities in an attractive natural setting.

Natural Environment parks incorporate outstanding recreational landscapes with representative features and historical resources to provide high quality recreational and educational experiences.

2.2 Goal:

THE GOAL FOR RONDEAU PROVINCIAL PARK IS TO PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF THE PARK ENVIRONMENT, ESPECIALLY ITS UNIQUE CAROLINIAN FEATURES, AND TO PROVIDE COMPATIBLE RECREATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL AND CONSERVATION ACTIVITIES.

2.3 Objectives:

Rondeau Provincial Park will contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Ministry of Natural Resources' Chatham District Land Use Guidelines and the Ontario provincial park system in the following manner:

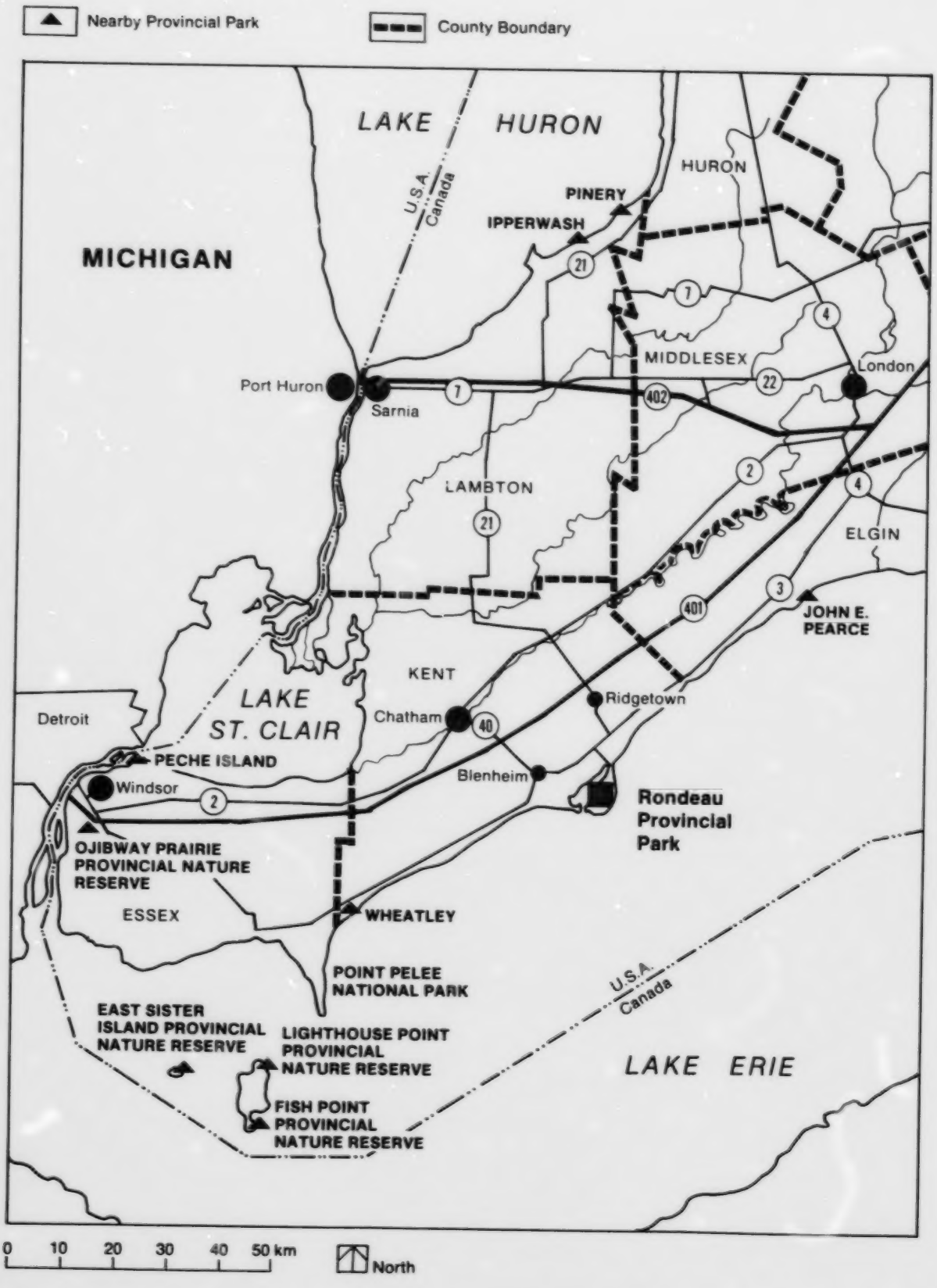
2.3.1 Protection:

TO PROTECT PROVINCIALLY SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS OF THE NATURAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF ONTARIO.

Rondeau is a cuspate sandspit formation supporting a Carolinian forest (a hardwood forest of southern character) together with significant wetland environments. This particular vegetation-landform feature is not represented elsewhere in Canada. The first priority for resource management in Rondeau will emphasize the protection of the park's natural forest, wetland and beach communities, including all associated flora and fauna. The objective will be to ensure

Figure 1

Park Setting



that these provincially and nationally significant natural landscapes are not lost or further degraded.

The Rondeau environment contains a number of interesting and rare species, such as tuliptree, swamp rose mallow and lake chubsucker. Threatened species include the eastern spiny soft-shelled turtle and nodding pogonia. The bald eagle, an endangered species, regularly nests in the park.

The Rondeau forest community has become well-known as one of Ontario's outstanding natural areas. The park's ecosystem is comprised of many plant species which are typical of more southerly regions of eastern North America. Besides its impressive diversity of herbaceous species, the forest also contains many imposing individual specimens of trees. Twenty-two species of Carolinian trees and shrubs occur or have occurred at Rondeau. Many wildflower species are also present.

Although representative of the eastern deciduous forest, a combination of factors specific to Rondeau and the lower Great Lakes have resulted in an ecosystem that is diverse, aesthetically appealing and scientifically unique.

2.3.2 Heritage Appreciation:

TO PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPLORATION AND APPRECIATION OF THE OUTDOOR NATURAL AND CULTURAL HERITAGE OF ONTARIO.

In Rondeau, opportunities for individual exploration and appreciation of the park's unique environment will be provided by a system of access routes, including interpretive and hiking trails. The park is one of the largest natural areas in southwestern Ontario and, as such, presents admirable opportunities for visitors to gain a better appreciation of the natural history of the Carolinian zone of southern Ontario on a year-round basis. These opportunities will be enhanced through visitor services programming.

2.3.3 Recreation:

TO PROVIDE OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES RANGING FROM HIGH INTENSITY TO LOW INTENSITY FACILITY-BASED EXPERIENCES.

Rondeau is one of the few parks in southwestern Ontario that can provide additional camping and day-use opportunities. Currently, Rondeau's 226 campsites provide seven per cent of the Chatham district camping opportunity target identified in the Chatham District Land Use Guidelines. When and if demand warrants, up to 225 additional campsites may be developed so that ultimately Rondeau will contribute 16 per cent of the district's total camping opportunity target. These additional campsites will be developed in a phased manner to provide opportunities for trailer campers, tenters and organized group campers as needed.

Similarly, additional day-use areas will be made available for picnicking and swimming. Rondeau's contribution to the Chatham district day-use target will rise from six per cent to about ten per cent.

Most of the additional camping and day-use facilities will be developed in the areas currently occupied by the cottage community. At present, the existing leasehold interests restrict access to the beach and lake.

In addition to picnicking and swimming, other summer season day-use activities include boating, hiking, cycling and fishing. Off-season activities include waterfowl hunting,

ice fishing and cross-country skiing.

2.3.4 Tourism:

TO PROVIDE VISITORS WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO DISCOVER AND EXPERIENCE THIS DISTINCTIVE REGION OF THE PROVINCE.

The natural and cultural heritage values both in Rondeau and the surrounding area attract visitors from a wide area. Seventy per cent of Rondeau's visitors are from southwestern Ontario, Michigan and Ohio.

2.4 Park Boundary:

Prior to 1984, all of Rondeau Bay was included within the park boundary. The current park boundary is shown in Figure 3. No changes to this boundary are planned. The portion of Rondeau Bay outside the boundary is administered by the Ministry of Natural Resources under the Ontario Public Lands Act.

2.5 Park Zoning:

The park zoning for Rondeau as provided for in this plan is shown in Figure 3. This zoning provides for the eventual planned major additions to the camping and day-use facilities and roadways when cottage sites become available.

Zoning of the landbase and wetlands of Rondeau ensures that these areas are allocated to their most appropriate use relative to the resource values requiring stewardship.

It is recognized that in order to achieve the protection and stewardship objectives of this plan, active management of Rondeau's deer-herd is essential for restoring a balanced ecology. Accordingly, deer population control may be carried out in all zones within the park (see Section 3.3.3).

2.5.1 Development Zones (398 hectares):

Development Zones provide for facilities and services for a range of day-use and camping activities. Within such zones, all maintenance and development activities will be carried out with special care for the environment. The cottage community occurs in zones D1 and D2.

North End Development Zone D1

This zone includes the park entrance and contains the main day-use and camping areas as well as administration and maintenance faciiities and cottages. An area for temporary storage of fallen tree debris will be located in the maintenance area of this zone. This will be the only such site in the park. Further development of day-use and camping facilities in this zone will occur as cottage sites become available (see Section 4.6).

Lake Erie Development Zone D2

Currently, this zone contains the Visitor Centre, a small day-use area, a boat launch facility and cottages. As cottage sites become available and demand warrants, the Lake Erie Campground may be developed in this zone in a phased manner. A new group camping area will also be located here once cottage sites become available (see Section 4.3.1 and 4.6).

2.5.2 Access Zones (308 hectares):

These zones serve as public or service vehicle travel routes and provide visitor access to the significant natural environment of the park. These zones include the roads and a 30-metre strip on both sides.

This strip alongside the roads will be managed in a manner compatible with the adjacent zone (that is, Nature Reserve or Natural Environ-

Figure 2

Park Features and Present Development

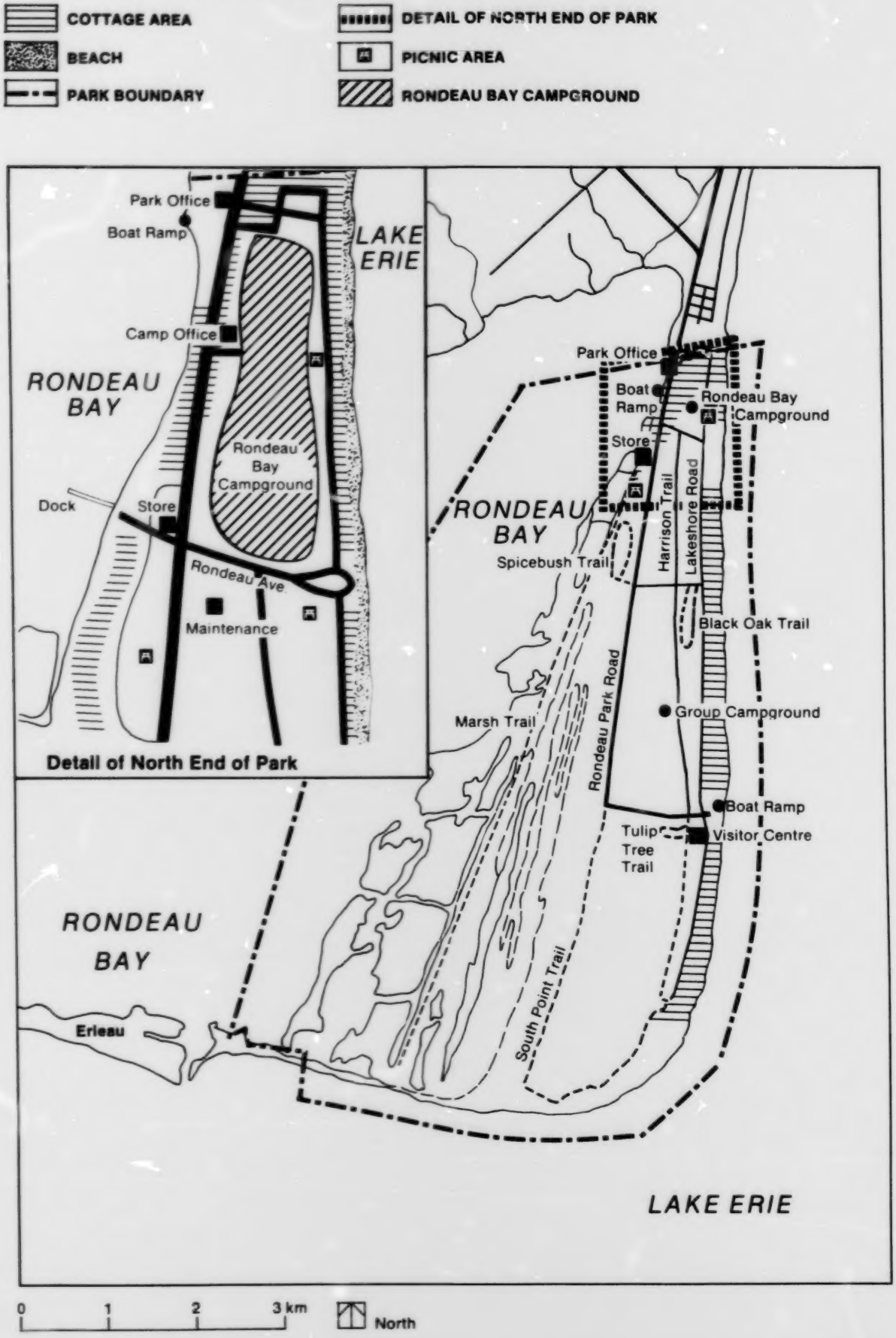
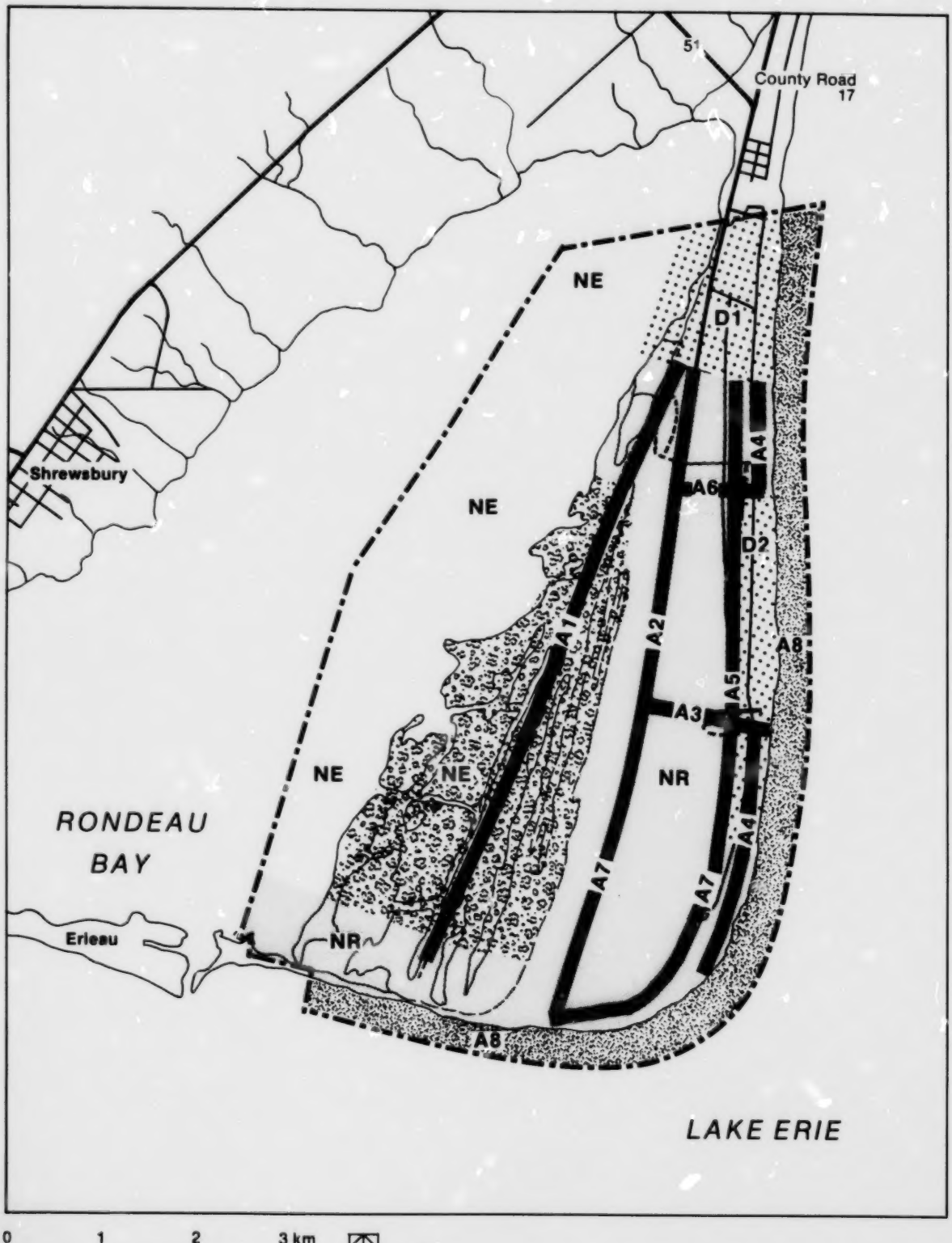


Figure 3

Park Boundary and Zoning



ment) whenever possible. However, operational or public safety requirements may determine the need to locate certain facilities within this strip (for example, utilities, culverts, pedestrian/cycling trails).

Marsh Access Zone Al

This zone provides access to the Rondeau marsh facilities and activities.

Rondeau Park Road, Gardiner Avenue and Lakeshore Road Access Zones A2, A3 and A4

These three zones provide primary access to the Lake Erie Development Zone and interpretive and hiking trails.

Harrison Trail, Bennett Avenue and South Point Trail Access Zones A5, A6 and A7.

These access zones provide secondary access to the Lake Erie Development Zone and to interpretive trails through the southern hardwood forest. Zone A7 is open only to pedestrians, bicycles and service vehicles.

Lake Erie Access Zone A8

This zone includes the waters of Lake Erie within the park boundary which extends 150 metres out into Lake Erie. It provides water access to the park's Lake Erie shoreline.

2.5.3 Natural Environment Zone NE (1,432 hectares):

This zone is extensive in area and includes most of the marsh and bay that is within the park boundary (See Figure 3).

The Rondeau marsh is a significant feature of the park and this zone, together with the adjacent portions of the Nature Reserve Zone, is designated to provide long-term stewardship of the marsh. Old dredge cuts and dykes in the marsh have become an established feature. These will be managed for the recreational access and the additional wildlife habitat which they provide.

Day-use fishing opportunities and fall waterfowl hunting opportunities are provided in this zone. Much of the area requires only passive management. However, monitoring of marsh vegetation and fisheries and waterfowl habitats will occur, and results from these may indicate a need for some future management (see Section 3.3).

2.5.4 Nature Reserve Zone NR (1116 hectares):

This zone is designated to provide long-term stewardship and protection of the natural and least disturbed areas of Rondeau's Carolinian forest and wetland environments. Deer population control is essential to the objective of this zone (see Section 2.3.1 and Section 3.3.3) and will occur within the zone.

The waterfowl hunting opportunities which have been occurring within the marsh area of this zone will be relocated to the Natural Environment Zone (see Section 2.5.3).

Opportunities for visitor appreciation of this significant environment will be provided by interpretive and hiking trails.

3.0 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT:

Rondeau will be managed in accordance with the general planning and management policies for Natural Environment class provincial parks.

Resource management strategies are required to recommend specific management techniques

or practices for vegetation (see Section 3.2) and fauna (see Section 3.3). In addition, monitoring of vegetative changes (see Section 3.2.2) as well as faunal populations and their changes (see Sections 3.3 and 3.3.3) is required. These planning, surveying and monitoring needs are inter-related. This will be recognized when undertaking these activities.

Additional direction to meet a number of special resource management requirements within Rondeau follows:

3.1 Water:

3.1.1 Quality:

The need to ensure good water quality for the park's many visitors requires that drinking and bathing water be monitored on a regular basis using approved testing techniques.

3.1.2 Levels:

Lake Erie's water level and currents greatly affect the natural environment of Rondeau. As the lake's level rises and falls, habitat changes occur both within Rondeau Bay and the many sloughs throughout the park. As these fluctuations are naturally occurring, no attempt will be made to control water levels in Rondeau Bay or in the sloughs.

All developed areas, facilities and roads will be maintained to ensure that natural drainage patterns are not affected.

3.1.3 Erosion:

Lake Erie's near-shore currents, influenced by the Erieau pier located west of the park, have caused severe erosion along the south beach. This process will be monitored to document and assess the impact on the south beach and ultimately on the bay and marsh. Strategies for minimizing the lake's effect may be necessary.

3.2 Vegetation:

3.2.1 Vegetation Management Principles:

The primary principle of vegetation management in Rondeau is to perpetuate the natural succession of plant communities native to the park and representative of its geographical location. This management principle can best be achieved by allowing Rondeau's plant communities to change naturally through time.

An additional principle is to protect rare, threatened and endangered species and those naturally occurring species that are representative of this southerly area of Ontario.

A vegetation management strategy will be prepared to recommend specific management techniques for fulfilling these principles and providing guidelines for the vegetation issues that follow.

3.2.2 Vegetation Management Issues:

Removal of Plants:

The protection of rare, threatened or endangered plant species may require the management of vegetation and may entail the extraction, or removal, of some plant species in prescribed areas of the park.

The vegetation management strategy may specify areas where vegetation may need to be removed in order to enhance the regeneration of particular plant communities or species. Logging for commercial purposes will not occur in Rondeau Provincial Park.

Removal of plants by the general public is prohibited. Collections for approved research

purposes may be carried out by ministry staff or with ministry approval provided that such collections do not threaten a plant population's viability.

Vegetation Monitoring:

Detailed botanical inventories are required for the Nature Reserve and Natural Environment Zones. A reconnaissance survey will be undertaken in Development Zones prior to development. Additional monitoring studies will map and quantify changes in vegetation over time throughout the park. This monitoring will be used to measure the effectiveness of specific management techniques, particularly the response of vegetation to deer population control (see Section 3.3.3).

Hazardous Trees:

Hazardous trees are those which may cause property damage or personal injury due to their failure. These include dead, diseased or decayed trees that could fall, or cause other trees to fall, on roadways and facilities.

Hazardous tree identification and management guidelines have been prepared for Rondeau to guide the implementation of this safety program.

The following policies will govern the treatment of hazardous trees:

Public Roads, Service Roads and Parking Lots: hazardous trees will be felled. If the felled tree constitutes a hazard or interferes with legitimate use and enjoyment of the park, it will be salvaged;

Trails: hazardous trees that threaten the safety of trail users may be felled. Only that portion of the felled tree that lies on the trail path may be moved aside. No material will be salvaged unless prescribed in the vegetation management strategy;

Development Zones: hazardous trees and those impeding development will be felled and salvaged.

Vegetation Planting:

Only indigenous species will be planted. Plantings in general will be restricted to the heavily used portions of the Development Zones where natural regeneration methods are too slow or uncertain. Examples include vegetative buffers, screens, shade trees and ground cover in the day-use, campground and beach areas. Plantings will not occur in other zones unless prescribed by the vegetation management strategy or as part of an approved scientific research program.

Cottage Lot Rehabilitation:

As cottages are removed, natural regeneration methods for vacated lots will be favoured where possible. Artificial regeneration methods such as the seeding and planting of indigenous species may be used where required to assist or accelerate the regeneration process.

Non-Native Species:

Additional non-native species will not be introduced. Existing introduced species will be managed as follows:

a) if an introduced plant species is spreading and threatening an indigenous plant population, it may be controlled or eliminated where feasible by the most environmentally sound method available. In particular, for example, barberry is spreading prolifically at the present time. It is expected that control measures for this non-native plant

will be required in the near future;

b) if the introduced species is not spreading, it is not considered to be a threat to indigenous plants. It therefore can either be left to die out naturally or it may be removed.

Noxious Weeds:

For the public's protection, poison ivy may be controlled as required in the Development Zones or along trails.

Insects and Disease:

Native insects and diseases that attack the vegetation in the park will normally be allowed to develop undisturbed. However, native insects and diseases which threaten values within the park for which the park has been established, aesthetic values within the Development Zones, or values outside the park will be controlled where necessary.

Insects and diseases which are not native to the park, such as the gypsy moth, will be controlled where feasible and appropriate. Where control is undertaken, it will be directed as narrowly as possible to the specific insect or disease so as to minimize effects on other components of the park's environment. Attempts will be made to prevent the introduction of non-native insects into the park and to eliminate them before they become established. Biological control will be used wherever practicable.

Chemicals:

The use of chemicals within the Development Zones to control, protect or promote vegetation will be kept to a minimum and used only if alternative methods are not feasible. Chemicals may be necessary to control noxious weeds, to repel animals from plants, to kill unwanted stumps or to fertilize vegetation in heavy use areas. Chemicals outside the Development Zones will not be used unless required under exceptional circumstances.

Grass Cutting:

Mowing will be carried out as required in the Development and Access Zones for aesthetic, access and safety purposes. It will be limited to day-use areas, campgrounds, beach access areas and roadsides.

Fire Management:

All fires will be controlled. Prescribed burns for management purposes may be considered. Direction will be provided in the vegetation management strategy. Fire protection for structures within the Development Zones is provided by agreement with the Township of Harwich.

Dune Protection:

Due to the sensitive nature of sand dunes, stabilization and rehabilitation measures may be undertaken if required (see Section 4.3.2).

3.3 Fauna:

Consistent with the principles for vegetation management, the main objective is to ensure that Rondeau continues to harbour the rare, threatened and endangered species and other indigenous faunal species representative of this southerly area of Ontario. A wildlife management strategy will be prepared to recommend specific management techniques for fulfilling this objective and to expand upon the issues that follow below. A comprehensive survey of faunal populations must be undertaken to identify significant species and habitats in the park.

3.3.1 Waterfowl:

Waterfowl hunting will be permitted in the marsh area of the Natural Environment Zone only. Within this zone, hunters must hunt from blind locations designated by the Ministry of Natural Resources. The number of blinds ranges from 25 to 30 depending upon water levels and marsh conditions. Waterfowl feeding sanctuaries will not be operated.

Waterfowl hunting in Rondeau is governed by regulation under the Ontario Game and Fish Act and is managed according to the Rondeau Waterfowl Management Unit Operating Plan. This plan guides the management of waterfowl hunting in all of Rondeau Bay.

Research and analysis concerning the impact of the use of lead shot in Rondeau will be conducted. Should significant adverse impacts be observed, a ban on the use of lead shot in Rondeau will be recommended.

3.3.2 Trapping:

Management trapping of muskrats in order to minimize damage caused by muskrat burrowing to the base of the marsh roads will be permitted within the Natural Environment and Marsh Access Zones under the supervision of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

No other forms of trapping will be permitted in the park except for specific management reasons (see Section 3.3.4).

3.3.3 Deer:

Deer are a natural, valued and interesting part of the Rondeau ecosystem and it is recognized that deer must always be present in this park. However, Rondeau's high deer population is having major undesirable effects on the park's significant Carolinian vegetation and consequently also on other valued wildlife species that are dependent on this habitat.

Deer numbers in Rondeau have increased significantly since the cessation of ministry-conducted culls to control the population in the mid-1970s. In 1991, the annual deer count recorded 593 animals.

Since 1978, specific studies and direct experience with fenced deer exclosures in Rondeau have shown that the deer population is having a major impact on the Carolinian forest. Tree and shrub species that are palatable to deer such as tulip tree, shagbark hickory, red oak, black oak, sassafras, black cherry and others could eventually be eliminated from the Rondeau forest if the browsing by the large number of deer continues. Species that deer do not find palatable such as hop hornbeam and spicebush would, in time, dominate the forest, thus completely altering its nature and composition. Herbaceous vegetation (for example, the white trillium) has also been severely impacted by browsing and trampling. The loss of and changes to these vegetative communities will also impact negatively on many of the significant and rare avian and other faunal species such as the prothonotary warbler that depend on the park ecosystem for all or part of their life cycles.

The only way to meet the protection objective (Section 2.3.1) of this plan, the preservation of the park's natural plant communities, is to reduce the size of the deer herd. Based on research and scientific judgement, the number of deer that can be allowed to be resident in Rondeau and yet allow the vegetative objective for the park ecosystem to be met is from 100 to 125 animals.

The Ministry of Natural Resources has examined various methods that might be used to

prevent continued deterioration of vegetation from deer browsing and to protect Rondeau's significant plant resources. These techniques were documented in the Rondeau Provincial Park Preliminary Management Plan and ranged from approaches whereby deer are killed to non-lethal methods, including birth control.

The Ministry of Natural Resources is committed to managing the herd by a non-lethal method whenever such an alternative technology for population control becomes scientifically feasible. At the current time, the most promising non-lethal option for herd control appears to lie in the development of a technology to control deer numbers by means of vaccination to inhibit doe fertility. Research in this field is currently being undertaken in the United States.

The Ministry of Natural Resources is working with and contributing funding to birth inhibitor technology research. At the present time, experimental research is centering on the development of a product to inhibit fertilization in captive white-tailed deer. Once a product is successfully refined, subsequent stages of the research will involve field tests and the development of a technology to deliver the vaccine to a free-ranging deer population such as exists at Rondeau. Every reasonable effort will be made to facilitate both the development and application of the technology to ensure its earliest possible use in the park. At appropriate stages during the research process, Rondeau will be used for pilot applications of this emerging technology.

However, in the absence of any practical alternative non-lethal technology at the present time, an initial cull will be undertaken to reduce the deer population to 100 to 125 animals. It is planned, at this time, that culling will be carried out only in 1991 and 1992. Thereafter, the intention is to rely on non-lethal methods if the necessary technology is ready for application. Culling will be carried out by ministry staff. Persons not employed by the ministry may be used in support roles, but will not be involved in the actual selection and shooting of deer.

The implementation of the deer population control program will be guided by a deer population control plan. This plan - which will be updated annually - will provide for the maintenance of the deer herd within Rondeau at the 100-125 animal level.

3.3.4 Nuisance Animals:

Within the Development Zones of Rondeau (see Section 4.6), some nuisance animal control may be necessary (for example, removal of skunks from under cottages). However, in the long run, reducing the potential for conflict between indigenous animals and man will be emphasized. Information and education will be the primary means of achieving this (see Section 4.1).

Feral animals are not a part of the natural community of Rondeau and they will be removed or destroyed under the supervision of the ministry.

3.4 Fisheries:

Commercial fishing and bait fishing are permitted within the park boundary on Lake Erie where it does not interfere with recreational activity. Rondeau Bay is closed to commercial fishing except for a few existing commercial bait fishing licences. These licences will be honoured in a continuing effort to offset shortages of bait fish supply in July and August experienced by the Rondeau area tourist-related sports fishing business. Periodic monitoring of the Rondeau Bay bait fish catches will occur to ensure that panfish,

yellow perch, large-mouth bass, other sport fish and rare fish such as the lake chubsucker are not being taken.

Recreational fishing will be encouraged. Coarse fish may be taken in accordance with federal and provincial regulations but not with a bow and arrow. Ice fishing, including the use of fishing huts, will be permitted but all structures must be removed from the ice prior to ice break-up. Open fires on the ice will not be allowed within the park.

Within the park waters of Rondeau Bay, fisheries management programs should be undertaken only after studies indicate that such programs will benefit the existing fishery. Fish management programs will be consistent with the Chatham District Fisheries Management Plan.

Good water quality is important to maintain the Rondeau Bay fishery. The ministry will encourage measures to improve the water quality and rehabilitate fish habitat.

3.5 Cultural Resources:

The cultural resources of Rondeau contribute to the history of Ontario. An inventory of sites and findings will be maintained at the park and their interpretation will be included as part of the Heritage Appreciation objective (Section 2.3.2) of the park. Some examples of cultural themes are: use by Indians for fishing and hunting, landmark for early travellers, a site for early fisheries and a cottage resort community.

Periodic monitoring will be undertaken and, if needed, particular preservation strategies will be prepared. Prior to new development a cultural resources inventory will be undertaken. Any artifacts discovered during future development will be preserved.

A cultural resources management strategy will be prepared to guide exploration, preservation and utilization of Rondeau's cultural resources.

4.0 OPERATIONS POLICIES:

In Rondeau, the visitor is to be provided with quality services that enhance public outdoor recreation and heritage appreciation opportunities.

The day-to-day operation of the park is governed by an annual work plan. The annual work plan will be consistent with Ontario provincial park operating standards and will be reviewed and updated as required.

4.1 Visitor Services:

The visitor services program will provide visitors with the opportunity to gain an understanding, awareness and appreciation for the natural and cultural resources of Rondeau. As well, this program will serve to provide visitors with information about the many varied resource management programs of the Ministry of Natural Resources. A visitor services strategy will be prepared to guide this program. Various components of the visitor services program are outlined below:

4.1.1 Information:

Information concerning the park resources, management, facilities, programs and nearby points of interest will be available at key points throughout the park. Information will be provided by a park leaflet, a tabloid newspaper, signs and special publications as required.

4.1.2 Interpretation:

The interpretive component will be directed

towards all visitors to the park. Its primary objective will be the interpretation of the biological, physical and cultural features of the park within its regional and provincial context.

The following themes will be emphasized:

- biological: for example, the southern hardwood or Carolinian forest, the forest/deer relationship, marsh, beach dunes and associated significant flora and fauna;

- physiographical: for example, the shoreline processes of erosion and deposition which are presently occurring along the Lake Erie shoreline;

- cultural: for example, the role of Rondeau in the fisheries of the Great Lakes and the importance of the area as a recreational resort.

The interpretive program will be delivered primarily from the Visitor Centre where exhibits, demonstrations and audio-visual shows will be made available.

The visitor services program at Rondeau will encourage groups (for example, school groups) to make the best use of the park's resources and facilities for outdoor education. Emphasis will be placed on providing group leaders with the information necessary for them to conduct successful outings in the park.

4.1.3 Outdoor Recreation:

Outdoor recreation programming will focus on year-round activities. Park staff will endeavour to inform visitors of the recreational opportunities in the surrounding areas as well as in the park.

4.2 Research:

The diversity of flora, fauna and their habitats at Rondeau, as well as the extent of recreational activities available, provides numerous opportunities for scientific research. All research will require the approval of the ministry. Appropriate research will be encouraged in order to gain a greater understanding of the natural and cultural values of the park. Recreation research will also be encouraged to evaluate the suitability of present programs, the satisfaction of park users and visitor activity patterns. Research priorities include:

- management and population dynamics of rare, threatened and endangered species;

- deer ecology and the response of vegetation to deer population control;

- deer population management methods;

- the impact of the use of lead shot on the marsh ecosystem;

- the role of fire in maintaining the marsh and prairie communities in Rondeau;

- a quantitative faunal inventory;

- ecological studies of individual species;

- user perception and attitude surveys;

- archaeological inventory and analysis.

4.3 Recreation Management:

4.3.1 Camping:

Currently, 226 campsites are provided in the Rondeau Bay Campground, while there are two campsites for groups in the group camp-

ing area.

Additional campsite capacity will only be added in Rondeau if and when demand warrants it.

If additional campsites are required, they will be developed according to the following concepts:

When a need for more campsites is demonstrated, this will be met first by expanding the Rondeau Bay Campground and, secondly, by developing the Lake Erie Campground. These changes can only be phased in once all cottages are removed from the required areas (see Section 2.5.1 and Figure 4). The group camping area will be relocated on a new site lying south of the Visitor Centre (see Figure 4) after all cottages are removed from this location.

Major improvements will be made to the Rondeau Bay Campground prior to its expansion. An additional comfort station with showers will be constructed. At least 50 per cent of the campsites will be provided with electrical hook-ups. Roadway layout will be reworked to provide more privacy and reduce maintenance costs. A playground will be provided nearby where it can serve campers and day-users.

Should a need develop for additional campsites, the Lake Erie Campground will be designed to serve campers desiring a less intensively developed setting. Campsites will be further apart from one another than in the Rondeau Bay Campground and no electrical hook-ups will be provided.

All of the campgrounds will be serviced with vault toilets, centralized garbage pick-up and water supply. Comfort stations, showers and laundry facilities will be available at the Rondeau Bay and Lake Erie Campgrounds. Services in all campgrounds may be altered from time to time to reflect the needs of park users.

4.3.2 Day-Use:

The park offers a variety of day-use opportunities throughout the year, such as boating, canoeing, sailing, fishing, skating, wildlife viewing and waterfowl hunting. Recreational snowmobiling is not permitted on the land base of the park.

Specific portions of the Lake Erie shoreline will be managed as day-use swimming and picnicking areas (see Figure 4). Vault privies, centralized garbage pick-up and picnic tables will be provided. Where necessary, boardwalks will provide convenient visitor access to the beach while minimizing erosion to the dune area (see Section 3.2.2). Day-use areas will be more clearly separated from the camping areas to provide a quieter camping environment.

4.3.3 Boating:

Recreational boating within the park boundary will be restricted to those activities that are compatible with the safety and enjoyment of other park users. Separate launch facilities will provide access to both Rondeau Bay and Lake Erie.

The natural fluctuation of water levels and aquatic growth within Rondeau Bay will influence recreational boating. These natural processes will not be managed within the park boundary.

4.3.4 Tennis Courts:

Providing that the existing courts are utilized sufficiently, they will be retained.

4.3.5 Trails:

To provide for the orderly and environmentally sound development of the park's trail system, a trail management strategy will be prepared.

A number of hiking, bicycling and interpretive trails totalling approximately 20 kilometres provide access to facilities and/or natural features throughout the park (see Figure 2). However, to improve upon access, the trail system will be further upgraded by the expansion of existing interpretive trails and the addition of new trails in order to provide greater opportunities to explore and appreciate the park's environment. For example, the Spicebush Trail may be extended to connect to the Marsh Trail, and bicycle paths parallel to roads may be considered. In some cases, extensive boardwalks and observation platforms will be incorporated. Where practical, these trails will be designed for the physically challenged.

Public vehicles are not permitted to drive on the Marsh Trail except on days when the Waterfowl Management Unit is open.

4.3.6 Bay Side Centre:

In the vicinity of the existing park store near Rondeau Bay, the Bay Side Centre will be developed to provide services to park users and to act as a social centre. Commercial services will include: a food outlet with outdoor patio; a store; bicycle, boat and canoe rentals; firewood sales; and other services compatible with park objectives.

Displays will provide visitors with information about activities, events and features both inside the park and in the local area.

Creative design of the Bay Side Centre will ensure that it has a distinct character and a strong association with Rondeau Bay.

4.3.7 Roads and Parking Areas:

The road network will be redesigned (see Figure 4) to provide safer and more enjoyable access to the park's features and facilities. Redundant or duplicate roads will be closed and revegetated. The portion of Lakeshore Road from the Visitor Centre south to the existing vehicular turnaround will be retained. This will allow visitors to view Lake Erie and the beach from their vehicles, and will make the South Point accessible to those who cannot walk a long distance.

Well-located and defined parking areas will be established to enhance convenient access to beach and picnic areas, trails and other day-use facilities. Existing park and campground entrances will be improved to expedite traffic flow and to enhance their appearances.

4.3.8 Utilities:

The Ministry of Natural Resources will construct, operate and maintain water and sewage (septic) systems necessary for park facilities. The existing central water system serving the park's north end is adequate for future expansion in this area. A second central water system will be constructed when required to serve the Lake Erie Development Zone. A natural gas pipeline will be extended into the park to more economically serve park buildings in the north end.

4.3.9 Visitor Centre:

The Visitor Centre is the base for the park's visitor services program and for the Friends of Rondeau. Major improvements will be made to encourage public use and maximize exposure to interpretive programs. Improve-

Rondeau Provincial Park Management Plan

Figure 4 Proposed Development

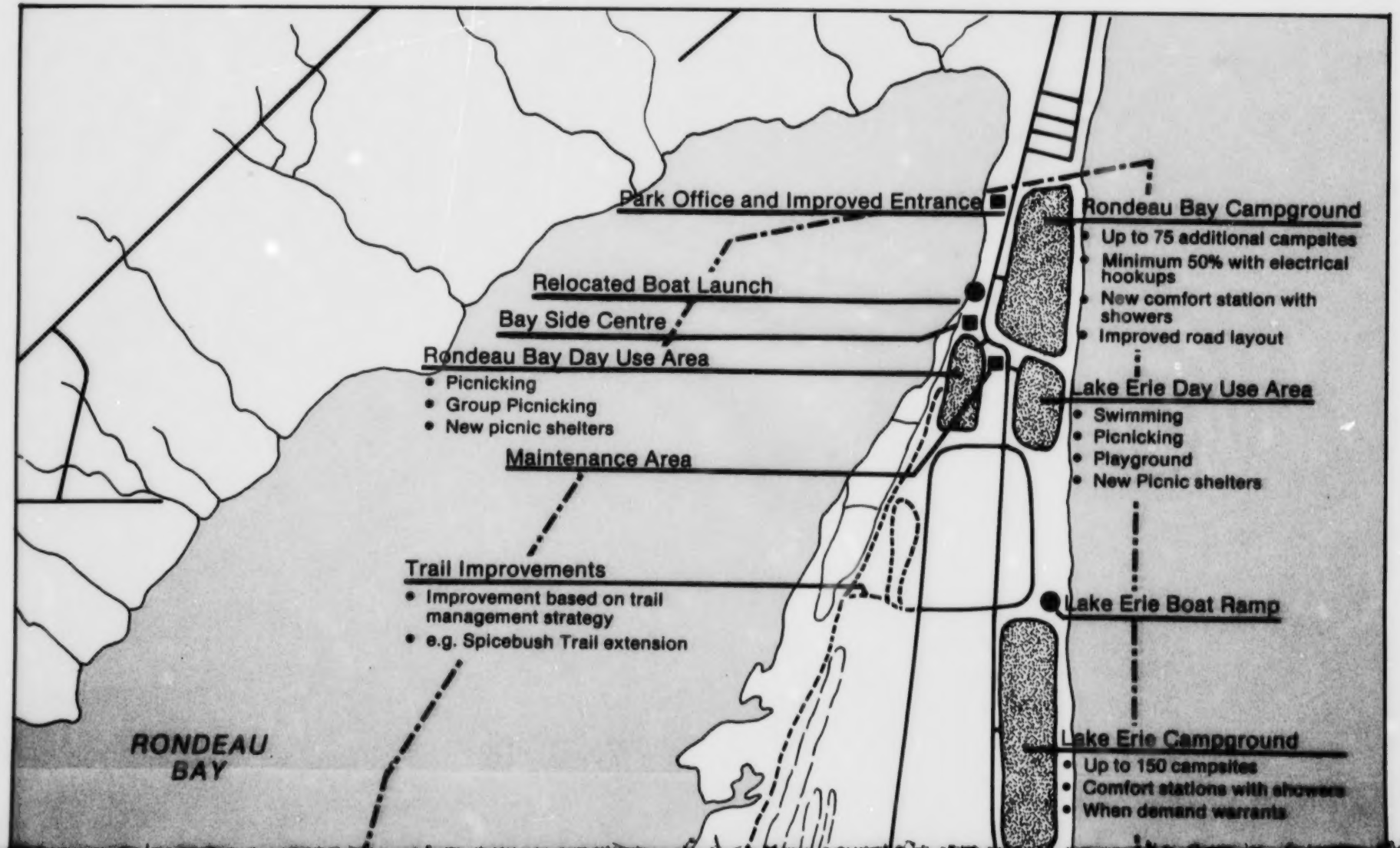
Ministry of Natural Resources
Ontario

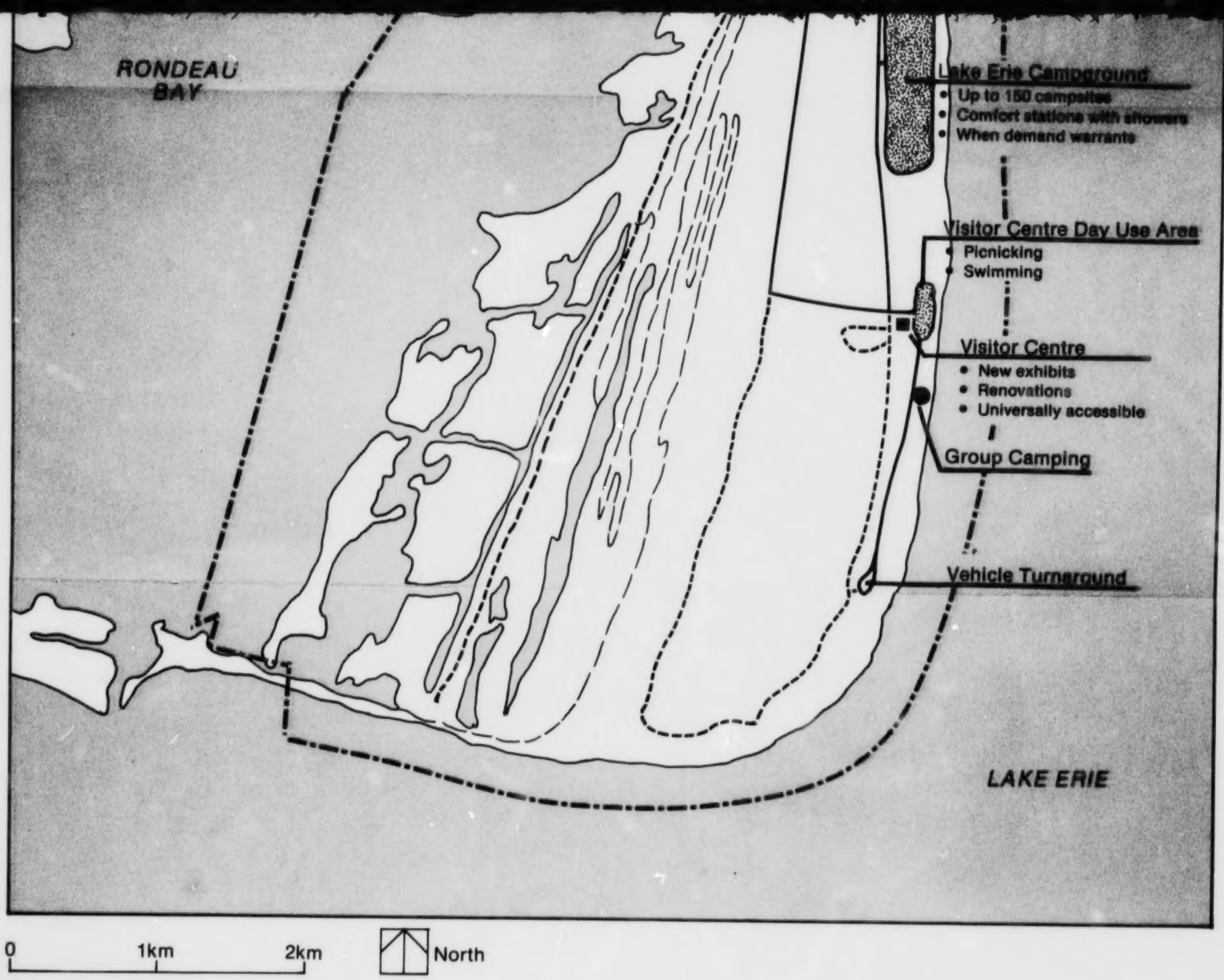
Park Boundary

Trail

Roadway

Major Development Areas




RONDEAU BAY
Lake Erie Campground
Up to 150 campsites
Comfort stations with showers
When demand warrants
Visitor Centre Day Use Area
Picnicking
Swimming
Visitor Centre
New exhibits
Renovations
Universally accessible
Group Camping
Vehicle Turnaround
LAKE ERIE
0
1km
2km
North

ments will include new exhibits, universal accessibility, washroom upgrading, a new theatre and internal renovations.

4.4 Marketing:

A marketing strategy will be prepared to promote Rondeau and the surrounding area and to attract more visitors from other parts of Ontario.

Rondeau is a vacation destination for many visitors. Over 66 per cent of the camping visitors stay four days or more.

The marketing of Rondeau Provincial Park will concentrate on increasing the public's awareness of the park's provincially significant features, particularly such naturally re-occurring phenomena as spring bird migration, on contributing to the local economy through increased park use and on emphasizing hospitality services for tourists and visitors.

Part of the marketing strategy for the park will emphasize co-operative contact with the local business community to encourage Rondeau Park visitors to take advantage of other locally available services and attractions outside the park.

4.5 Commercial Services:

All commercial services established in the park must be compatible with provincial park policies and this management plan's objectives. Such services will be established only to serve park visitors. Care will be taken to minimize the duplication of services available locally from the private sector.

Incompatible services will not be developed in the park. Location of such facilities outside the park will be at the discretion of local authorities, in compliance with local by-laws.

4.6 Leasehold Interests:

Cottages:

Cottages were introduced into Rondeau Provincial Park during the 1890s and have existed on the basis of a twenty-one year lease of a cottage lot with right of renewal. A cottage leasehold situation exists in the provincial park system only in Algonquin and Rondeau Provincial Parks.

In 1986, as a result of recommendations put forth by the Ontario Provincial Parks Council, a policy was approved whereby leaseholders were given the opportunity to extend their leases to December 31, 2017 through a lease-amending agreement. In 1990 there were 299 cottage leases in the park.

Acquisition and removal of cottages will be necessary in some priority areas if redevelopment and expansion of park facilities is to take place prior to 2017. Therefore, the Ministry of Natural Resources will acquire cottages on a priority basis (see Figure 5) as they become available on the market. Such acquisition is subject to availability of funds.

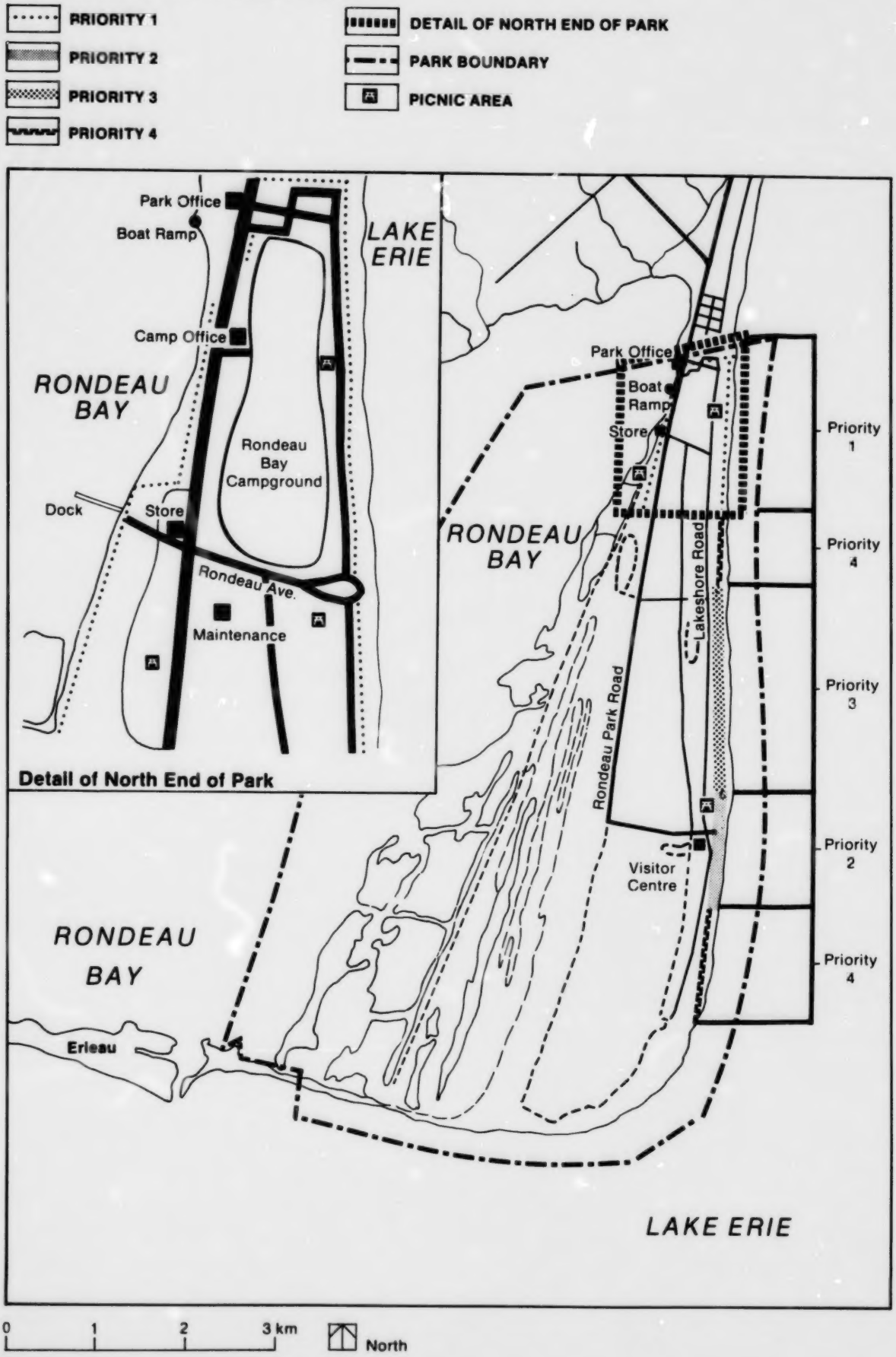
Existing Church Buildings:

The existing Anglican and Roman Catholic church buildings within the park will be administered under the terms of an annual land-use permit.

Provided that there is support and interest and that the buildings are maintained in a good state of repair, these church organizations will be granted permit renewals.

Figure 5

Priority Areas for Cottage Acquisition



Yacht Club:

The Rondeau Yacht Club will be allowed to operate until December 31, 2017 provided that it has sufficient membership support to maintain the associated structures in a safe and appealing condition. The Rondeau Yacht Club will be administered under the terms and conditions of annual land-use permits.

4.7 Pointe aux Pins Light:

The light beacon, located on the southeast beach, is a valued reference point for Lake Erie navigation. This light is managed by the Federal Government.

4.8 Emergency Services:

A park emergency plan has been prepared and provides direction regarding human safety and evacuation. This plan is reviewed yearly and will require periodic updating as park redevelopment proceeds.

4.9 Law Enforcement:

The focus for enforcement will be on providing a pleasurable experience for all park users and protecting the natural environment of Rondeau. The emphasis will be to ensure that all visitors respect park values and the rights of fellow park users. The enforcement program will be carried out in accordance with Ministry of Natural Resources' policies, acts and regulations and the Chatham District Enforcement Plan.

4.10 Volunteers:

Volunteer organizations, such as the Friends of Rondeau, and individual volunteers contribute significantly to the park. These contributions are of great value to the visitor services program in particular. The ministry will provide support in a variety of ways to encourage continuing involvement of volunteers in park programs and resource management.

5.0 DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES:

The principles and priorities that will guide future development in Rondeau are as follows:

- upgrading of the facilities and realigning the road network within the North End Development Zone to improve the camping experience and to separate day-use from camping activities will be the initial development priorities;

- when cottages are removed from within the Priority 1 cottage acquisition area, phased redevelopment and expansion of facilities in the North End Development Zone may then be undertaken. This will permit the relocation of day-use facilities further away from the Rondeau Bay Campground, thereby aiding in the reduction of user conflicts in the use of the park;

- design plans and site plans will be completed and approved in advance of all redevelopment, new development or upgrading of facilities and services;

- the design for all development or upgrading of facilities will focus on efficiency of maintenance and operation by emphasizing the use of low maintenance materials, energy conserving designs, low staffing requirements, and ease of access. In addition, emphasis will be placed on the attractiveness of facilities and the convenience for use of them by all visitors, including the handicapped. Repaving of paved roads and paving of key unpaved roads will be an ongoing activity;

- all facilities and services will be upgraded or designed to meet both provincial park standards and applicable building codes. Main roads and day-use parking areas will be paved. Secondary roads and internal campground roads and parking areas do not require paving.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE:

This management plan will be reviewed every ten years or as the need arises. Data collection and environmental monitoring will be conducted regularly.

Implementation of this plan is divided into five phases in order to provide guidance for preparing annual park operating and work plans. These phases recognize the inter-relationships between the various development needs. For example, this management plan requires redevelopment of the existing campground and the possible addition of the new Lake Erie Campground. These depend upon an orderly removal of the cottages, realignment of portions of the park's road system and relocation or upgrading of certain facilities.

The implementation schedule is as follows:

6.1 Phase 1:

6.1.1 Development:

- upgrading of entrance signage and interim improvement to the park entrance control system including staff parking;
- upgrading of day-use facilities (picnic shelters, playgrounds, water supply system) in North End Development Zone;
- re-alignment of existing campground roads to improve campground layout;
- upgrading of existing campsites and their associated facilities in the Rondeau Bay Campground (posts, fire pits, additional electrical hook-ups, etc.);
- construction of a new comfort station with showers to serve the Rondeau Bay Campground;
- construction of vault privies to service the Lake Erie day-use area;
- converting the north end park facilities to natural gas for energy supply (office, washrooms, warehouse, etc.);
- establishing a boat launching facility to improve access to Rondeau Bay and the marsh, and upgrading the associated parking lots;
- re-paving of primary park roads (on-going);
- establishing an area in the maintenance yard for temporary storage of fallen tree debris;
- continuing the rehabilitation of vacated leasehold sites.

6.1.2 Management:

- preparation and implementation of a deer population control program;
- undertaking a comprehensive inventory of flora and fauna;
- initiating resource-related monitoring programs, such as for vegetation and the impact of lead shot;
- preparation of a vegetation management strategy;

- preparation of a wildlife management strategy;
- preparation of a marketing strategy;
- undertaking a cultural resources inventory prior to development;
- preparation of a trail management strategy;
- preparation of a visitor services program strategy.

6.2 Phase 2:

6.2.1 Development:

- implementing the trail management strategy;
- upgrading the existing Visitor Centre (including construction of new displays, improvement of energy efficiency, upgrading of theatre and projection facilities);
- construction of a new entrance and/or camp office control centre (includes re-alignment of roads and campground entrance in North End Development Zone);
- continuing the rehabilitation of vacated leasehold sites.

6.2.2 Management:

- establishing a Lake Erie shoreline monitoring program;
- preparation of a cultural resources management strategy;
- implementing the vegetation management strategy;
- controlling deer population levels;
- implementing the wildlife management strategy.

6.3 Phase 3:

6.3.1 Development

- construction of a portion of the Bay Side Centre (bike rental, firewood, food, display area);
- continuing the rehabilitation of vacated leasehold sites.

6.3.2 Management:

- continuing control of deer population levels and the various monitoring programs.

6.4 Phase 4:

6.4.1 Development:

- completing the expansion of the Rondeau Bay Campground and associated facilities (tables, site markers, travel routes, washrooms, etc.);
- relocating the trailer dumping and filling station and rehabilitation of old sites to intended use;
- construction of vault privies in the Rondeau Bay day-use area;
- completion of the Bay Side Centre facilities;
- upgrading the maintenance compound;
- removing the present Rondeau Bay day-use washrooms and rehabilitation of the site to intended use;

- continuing the rehabilitation of vacated leasehold sites.

6.4.2 Management:

- continuing control of deer population levels and the various monitoring programs.

6.5 Phase 5:

6.5.1 Development:

- establishing a group camping area and associated facilities;

- construction of a revised public road system and the rehabilitation of the old system to intended use;

- construction of Lake Erie boat ramp and associated facilities (parking lot, ramp);

- removal of existing Lake Erie ramp location and rehabilitation of the site to intended use;

- completing construction of Visitor Centre day-use area and associated facilities expansion (parking lot, tables, barbecues, etc.);

- possible construction of the Lake Erie Campground and associated facilities.

6.5.2 Management:

- continuing control of deer population levels and the various monitoring programs.

7.0 SUMMARY OF THE RONDEAU PROVINCIAL PARK PLANNING PROGRAM:

In February 1974, the then Minister of Natural Resources appointed a 16-member public Advisory Committee to submit recommendations on the future of Rondeau Provincial Park. The Advisory Committee was charged with the responsibility of directly consulting interest groups and the general public for opinions on the future direction of Rondeau.

A summary of the various stages of public involvement in the planning process for Rondeau is as follows:

STAGE I - 1974
4,800 copies of a general information booklet were distributed by the Advisory Committee to the public. Five public meetings were held in which 630 people were in attendance and 74 people made oral presentations. In addition, 120 written briefs were received, as well as a petition of 7,000 signatures;

STAGE II - 1975 to 1977
2,500 copies of a Draft Policy Recommendations Report were distributed, based on the Advisory Committee's deliberations. Four public meetings were held to obtain public input to the recommendations. Five hundred and thirty people were in attendance and 74 made oral presentations. One hundred and eighty-seven briefs were submitted, as well as a petition of 177 signatures.

Based on this public input, the Advisory Committee submitted its final Policy Recommendations Report to the Minister of Natural Resources in the fall of 1975. This report contained 104 recommendations. In April 1976, the Minister replied to the Committee accepting 93 recommendations. Four additional recommendations were accepted following modifications, seven recommendations were rejected and several required additional study, for example, deer management. This reply was sent to all of the groups and individuals who were on the Committee's mailing list;

STAGE III - 1977 to 1978
A planning consultant, W. E. Coates and Associates of Guelph, Ontario, used the approved policy recommendations to formulate a preliminary master plan. In the summer of 1977, the Advisory Committee held three public hearings to present the plan to the public and 1,000 full copies of the plan and another 3,000 abbreviated copies were distributed. Four hundred and forty people attended these meetings with 65 oral presentations. In addition, 21 briefs were received. On September 20, 1977, the Advisory Committee submitted its recommended Rondeau Provincial Park Preliminary Master Plan to the Minister. Although the preliminary master plan was not approved, the efforts of the Advisory Committee have given guidance to the day-to-day management and operation of Rondeau Provincial Park while the ministry considered a number of the Committee's recommendations in greater detail.

The public Advisory Committee for Rondeau Park was officially disbanded in the spring of 1978.

All of the documents, briefs, transcripts and meeting minutes of the Rondeau Advisory Committee are on file in the Chatham office of the Ministry of Natural Resources and are available for public scrutiny;

STAGE IV - 1978 to 1983
The park was administered using the approved policy recommendations with any development or improvements reflecting the development concept recommended in the Advisory Committee's preliminary master plan.

Also during this period, Advisory Committee recommendations that had not been accepted by the Minister were discussed, and management research was conducted to answer pending questions such as forest/deer management and Rondeau Bay management;

STAGE V - 1983 to 1985
The Chatham District Land Use Guidelines was completed and approved. The park management planning process was re-initiated utilizing the revised guidelines for management plans, management research recommendations and accepted Advisory Committee recommendations;

STAGE VI - 1985 to 1989
The Ontario Provincial Parks Council was requested by the Minister of Natural Resources to review the issue of cottaging in Rondeau and Algonquin Provincial Parks. A revised plan, which reflected the recommendations presented by the Council, was published as the Rondeau Provincial Park Preliminary Management Plan. The preliminary plan was released for public review and comment on July 19, 1989;

STAGE VII - 1989 to 1990
The public was informed of the preliminary plan's release and its contents through use of newsreleases, information handouts at Rondeau and a display at the park's Visitor Centre. Close to 300 comments, in the form of letters, form letters and petitions, were received from groups and individuals. These comments were analyzed and evaluated. The preliminary management plan was subsequently revised to reflect comments received, insofar as this was compatible with overall ministry objectives;

STAGE VIII - Late 1990-1991
The final Rondeau Provinical Park Management Plan was prepared and released to the public.

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